THE INCONSISTENCY OF Man's Dagon WITH GOD'S ARK.

OR,

A sober Discourse, shewing the great sinfulness of Humane Mixtures in Divine Worship.

From 2. *Zeph.* the latter part of the 5. *v.* to 48. 8. *In their setting of their Threshold and their Posts by my Posts, and the Wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name,* &c. to 6. 17. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing,* &c.

Superstition is a sin opposite to Religion. Aquin. No matter what the thing be in matters of Religion, but who it is that commands it, we must look to that truth.

Summæ Religionis est imitari quem colis.

LONDON, Printed for *Tho. Mitchell.* 1682.

TO THE READER.

Reader,

I *Need make no other Apology for the Publiſhing of this ſhort Diſcourſe, than what* David *did to his Brother* Eliab, *being ſeverely cenſured and ſharply rebuked by him for coming down to ſee the Battle; What have I now done, ſaith he, is there not a cauſe? when the pure Worſhip of God is both defied and defiled, is there not a cauſe to ſpeak in the Vindication thereof? That Dumb Son when he ſaw his Father ready to be ſlain, though he never ſpake before, yet his filial Affection did then ſo break the Bars of his Speech, that he cries out, Oh do not kill my Father! Who is there that hath any filial Affection to God, can behold his holy Name ſo defiled, by Mens ſetting*

their Posts by his Posts (which is a kind of Deicidium) *and be silent? It is meet our Mouths that are made for God should speak for God; and* Luther *would rather be accounted any thing, than be accused of sinful silence in the Cause of Christ. It is not Ambition, or any vain Glory, but a sense of my Duty, that hath engaged me to this adventure, at such a time when men are made Offenders for a Word; but it is God's cause I plead, his Glory, as greatly concerned herein. I am conscious of my own Weakness, and far from thinking I have done any thing worthy of the Readers acceptance.*

Here are plain Truths in plain Expressions, without the Embroideries of Rhetorical flourishes, ever esteeming Truth to be most comely and beautiful when she appears in her native Dress. I pretend not to new discovery, nor to amuse thee with abstruse notions. And if any shall object there are many pieces extant that treat

of

of this Argument, therefore this might well have been spared, I readily grant all they say; but to write something (de novo) of this Subject, which is the suffering Truth of the times, may not (I conceive) be unseasonable. What is here presented is but the substance of one Sermon, with a little addition composed many years since, and if it may contribute to the settlement and satisfaction of any who are scrupulous, or in the dark about this great point, or convince any who adhere to sinful mixture in Divine Worship, I have my end.

Reader, I desire thee to weigh well what I have now inserted, in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and then judge. As for the other small piece here annexed, it treats of an excellent Duty, almost antiquated and out of use amongst the Professors of this Age, the neglect of which hath had a bad tendency to the decay of the life & power of Godliness; there is but little that I know of, written of this Subject, and I

have made this Eſſay that I might provoke ſome more able perſon to write more fully about it, which certainly would be very ſeaſonable, and through Gods Bleſſing profitable ſervice. I ſhall hold you no longer in the Porch: Conſider what is here ſaid, and the Lord give thee Underſtanding in all things.

THE

THE INCONSISTENCY OF Man's Dagon WITH GOD'S ARK, &c.

ZEPH. I. V.

——*And them that worſhip, and that ſwear by the Lord, and that ſwear by* Malcham.

THE great Truth which the Lord calls his People to contend for at this day, is the purity of his Worſhip, and the Worſhip of God is ſo great a thing as it is worth contending for; I have therefore choſen to inſiſt upon this Argument at this time.

This Prophet doth threaten a general deſo-

lation, *v.* 3. *I will consume Man and Beast*: Not only Man is threatned to be cut off that had sinned, but the Creatures also which they had abused to their Lust.

This People had been often warned and admonished of their sins by former Prophets, but went on incorrigibly, therefore the Lord proceeds to give Sentence against them by this Prophet. Hence this is observable:

Doctr. That God will not always strive with sinners, his abused Patience will have an end. Though God doth long bear with sinners, yet he will not always bear with them, tho long suffering, yet not always suffering; and when he will be no longer burdened with their sins, then they must be burdened with his judgments. In the 4th *ver.* he tells us who they are that fall under this severe threatning, *Judah, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem*: and their sins are pointed at which had provoked the Lord to sentence them thus severely. There is in this Chapter a large Bill of Indictment drawn up against them, and the Sins of Idolatry and Superstition are set in the Front of this Bill, as being sins of the first magnitude; *I will cut off the Remnant of Baal from this place*: that is, those that notwithstanding *Josiah*'s Refor-

eformation held up ſome part or Remnant of
aal's Worſhip; *and them that worſhip the*
ſt of Heaven: Thoſe were another ſort of
olaters, ſuch as obſerved and imagined a
ity in the Stars *And them that worſhip, and*
at ſwear by the Lord, and ſwear by Malcham,
t divided and mixed the Worſhip of God
h the ſervice of Idols.

[*That ſwear by the Lord*] To ſwear is a
t of Gods Worſhip, yea ſo eminent a part
it is ſometimes put for the whole Worſhip
God: *Pſal.* 63. 11. *Iſa.* 19. 18. and ſo it
aken in the Text. [*And ſwear by* Mal-
am] which ſignifies their King, and it is
s one conceives upon the place) *Molech* the
ol of the Amorites, 1 *King* 1. 7. They call
ir Idol by the name King, *Honoris gratiâ*,
Honour ſake: Thus they halted between
d and Idols, they made a profeſſion of ſer-
g the true God, yet did mix his Worſhip
h the ſervice of Idols.

It is ſtoried of *Redwald* King of the *Eaſt-*
ans, in the time of the Heptarchy in *Eng-*
d, in the ſame place he worſhipped God,
ſet up an Altar to Worſhip his Idol.

And it's reported of an Emperor of *Rome*,
t in one Temple he would have Chriſt and
ſlens worſhipped both together; ſo they

swear by the Lord, and they swear by Malcham; and these are here ranked with the grosser sort of Idolaters, and threatned to drink of the same Cup of Gods Fury and Indignation. The words will afford us this Observation.

2. *Doct.* That a mixture in the Worship of God is very sinful and abominable in his sight, and a sin so highly provoking, as it will bring swift destruction upon those who are guilty thereof.

This Doctrine consists of these 2 Branches.

1. That a mixture in the Worship of God is very displeasing to, and abominable in his sight.

2. That it is a sin so highly provoking, as it will bring down swift destruction upon those who are guilty of it. For those are put into the black Roll to be destroyed with the Remnant of *Baal*, and them that worship the Host of Heaven.

I shall speak something to each of these, to begin with the first of these particulars.

1. A mixture in Gods Worship is great displeasing to him. God who is of purer Eyes than to behold the least Iniquity with the least approbation, cannot but behold this great Iniquity with the greatest detestation. Mens tra-

dition

tions mixed with the pure Inſtitutions and ordinances of God, they are (as one ſaith) as oak to his Eyes, as Gall to his Taſte, and an abomination to his Spirit.

There are 3 Arguments and Demonſtrations which I ſhall lay down to clear the truth of his Aſſertion.

1. If God will be worſhipped only according to his own appointments, then the leaſt mixture in his Worſhip is very diſpleaſing to him; but God will be worſhipped only according to his own appointments. This is clear in the matter of the Ark, 2 *Sam.* 6. 7. it was not *Uzza*'s putting his hand to the Ark, but his carting the Ark that diſpleaſed God, and for which he was ſmitten, it being not according to Gods appointments; for by Divine appointment it was to be carried upon the Shoulders of the *Levites*, 1 *Chron.* 15. 12, 13. *Moſes* in making the Tabernacle was admoniſhed to do all things according to the pattern ſhewed him in the Mount, *Heb.* 8. 5. *Moſes* muſt not go a hairs-breadth from his pattern. The Lord commanded in building the Altar of Stones not to lift an Iron Tool upon them, *Deut.* 27. 5. A man would think (ſaith one) that to carve and paint the Stones would be better than to have the Stones rough: No, ſaith

God, if you do but lift up an Iron Tool upon it you pollute it, *Exod.* 20. 25. And *Solomon* in making the Temple, wherein God placed his Worship, was to do every thing according to Divine appointment, 2 *Chron.* 3. 5. so exact is God to have every thing in his Worship according to his own appointment.

2. If it be a good thing, and very pleasing to God to keep to the purity of his Worship, then the contrary must needs be displeasing to God; but it's a good thing, and very pleasing to God to keep to the purity of Worship, *Joh.* 4. 23. God seeketh such to worship him, as being highly pleased and greatly delighted with such Worshippers; and *v.* 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit,* that is with inward Love and Sincerity, *and in Truth,* that is, according to the true Rule prescribed in his Word: Spirit respects the Inward Power, and Truth the Outward Form: God is not pleased with any thing in his Worship that is not his own.

3. If to mix the Worship of God with human Inventions be a sin that God will severely punish, then it's very displeasing to him; But it is a sin he will severely punish. They who are guilty of this sin in the Text are threatned with Destruction: So *Ezek.* 43. 8. they set their Posts by

Gods Poſt, and their Threſhold by His reſhold: *i. e.* They introduced their own entions into his Worſhip, and thereby pol-ed his holy Name; *Wherefore* (ſaith God) *I ve conſumed them in mine Anger.* The Wor-p of God (ſaith one) is a prime and precious re, the ultimate end of all our ſacred per-mances, though the Edification of Man be end ſubordinate.

ly, Why is God ſo diſpleaſed with mixtures is Worſhip?

Reaſon 1. Becauſe the leaſt mixture in his orſhip doth defile his Worſhip, as when any ng that is worſe is mixed with that which is ter, the better is defiled; ſo Gold is defiled en mixed with baſer metal, the Wine is a-erated when mixed with Water; when the ure Inventions of men are mixed with the e Inſtitutions of Chriſt, then is Gods Wor-p defiled, when men will mix their Water h Gods Wine, their Droſs with his Gold, y defile his Worſhip; therefore ſaith God, k. 43. 8. *In their ſetting their Poſts by my s, and their Threſhold by my Threſhold y have defiled my holy name.* Gods orſhip is his Name, External Worſhip is Name, the Temple is called the place

where God put his Name, that is, his Wo
ſhip, 1 *King.* 9. 3. As a man is known by h
Name ſo is God known by his Worſhip; no
this cannot but exceedingly diſpleaſe God whe
his Name is polluted.

Reaſ. 2. Becauſe mixtures in Gods Wo
ſhip diſhonour him much, yea, ſo much di
honour is reflected upon God hereby, as whe
his Worſhip is mixed he doth not accou
himſelf honoured at all; we have a notabl
Inſtance 2 *King.* 17. 33. *They feared the Lo*
and ſerved their own Gods after the manne
the Nations, whom they carried away from thence
And *v.* 34. it's ſaid they did not fear him:
divided fear is no fear, a mixed Worſhip is n
Worſhip for Gods approbation. *Jer.* 32. 23
They have done nothing (ſaith the Prophet)
all that thou commandedſt them to do: Why
but becauſe their fear was divided. God wi
have all or none at all. To ſet up any thin
in competition with God is a great diſhonou
to him, and high diſpleaſing in his ſight
God cannot endure any Competitor. Whe
Darius ſent to *Alexander* to divide with hi
no, ſaith *Alexander*, there can be but one Su
in the Firmament. Could not *Alexander* en
dure a Competitor, and do you think God can

Th

he Lord cannot endure that any part of his
onour ſhould be given to another, *Iſa.* 42.
o make any thing equal with God is very
iſhonourable to him, they who ſet up an Idol
ake it equal with God: All falſe Worſhip is
ſetting our Poſts by Gods Poſts, and of our
hreſhold by His Threſhold; a making (as
e ſaith) both of equal height and worth,
hich redounds much to Gods diſhonour, *Iſa.*
. 25.

3ly, Becauſe it is a great intrenching upon
eKingly Office of Chriſt; for if Chriſt beKing,
certainly he is, then the Legiſlative Power
only in the hands of Chriſt; for he is King
one, and none have Power to place an Or-
nance or Ceremony in the Church but Chriſt
ly, who is Head and King of it: This is
e Prerogative Royal of Chriſt. Not *Moſes*
the Tabernacle, nor *Solomon* in the Temple
ight preſcribe any Subſtantial or Ceremonial
orſhip, *Ex.* 35. 10. 2 *Chron.* 3. 3. and for
en to introduce their Inventions into the
orſhip of God, what a bold intruſion is
is upon the Kingly Office of Chriſt? And if
be death to counterfeit the Kings Coin, what
o they deſerve that dare to counterfeit the
oin of the King of Heaven?

4ly, Becauſe mixtures in Divine Worſhip
do

do alienate the Heart from God. Christ saith *Mat.* 6. *No man can serve two Masters*; and this is so the Prophet tells us, *Hos.* 4. 11. that *Whoredom, Wine, and new Wine do take away the heart.* False Worship is spiritual Whoredom, that alienates and estranges the Heart from God. Who cry down more, or are more careless of the pure Worship and Institutions of Christ, than those that are most busie and careful to set up the Inventions of Men? *Deut.* 32. 15, 16. Such are all for an outward formality, nothing for the inward Power, and this must needs be displeasing to God, who is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth.

5ly, Because it frustrates the Commands of God. Christ tells the Scribes and Pharisees, *Mat.* 15. 6. that they made the Commandments of God of no effect by their Traditions; and saith he, *v.* 9. *In vain do ye worship me, teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of Men.* Such Worship is a nullity in the account of God, an insignificant Cipher, and therefore highly displeasing to him. So much for the first Branch or part of the Doctrine.

2. *Branch.* That it is a sin so highly provoking, as it will bring swift Destruction up-

n thoſe who are guilty of it, and no ſin ſooner: *Deut.* 4. 25, 26. It is a ruining ſin, for this n chiefly the Lord brought ſuch ſad calamies upon his own people the Jews. Oh what gnal and remarkable Judgments did their corupting and adulterating the Worſhip of God aw down upon their Heads!

1. It kindles the Lords Jealouſie. The Lord ſaid to be a jealous God in the matters of his Worſhip, 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. And in the 2d Commandment (which relates to the Worſhip of od) he threatens to viſit the breach of that on the Children unto the 3d and 4th Geneation. What did God do to the 7 Churches *Aſia*, for corrupting his Worſhip? And hat may hang over this Nation for their ſinl mixtures in Gods Worſhip I tremble to ink.

2. It is a ſin that will provoke the Lord to ave and forſake a People, and no ſin ſooner. will make God to break up houſe and be one. The Temple was called Gods glorious gh Throne, his Habitation, his Sanctuary, e place where he recorded his name; yet hen the Worſhip of God was corrupted, he aves his Temple, he breaks up houſe, the lory of the Lord departed from the Cheruns, *Ezek.* 9. 3. If they will come into his

House he will out; when the Ark comes in *Dagon* goes down, and when *Dagon* comes in the Ark goes out. And when God departs from a People, then all Judgments come upon them. To be deprived of the greatest good is to be invested with the greatest evils, as Night succeeds day, and Darkness Light, so Judgments succeed Mercies, and the greater the Mercies the greater the Judgments that follow; when Gods hedge of Protection is taken away from a People, then are they exposed to, and vexed with the greatest Evils; when God is further from a People, then Evils are nearest to them. The Presence of God is Banishment to all Evil, but the Absence of God is Banishment from all Good. When God is once departed Destruction cannot be far off, *Hos.* 9. 12. *Yea woe also to them when I depart from them.* Nothing but Woe and Misery can be written upon the Forehead of such a People. Gods departure is the rise and original of all Evil. And so I have dispatched both the parts of the Doctrine, and come to the Application of the whole.

APPLICATION.

Use. Is it thus that a mixture in the Wo

ſhip of God is a ſin ſo greatly diſpleaſing to him, and a ſin that will bring ſwift deſtruction upon thoſe who are guilty of it? then here is matter of Reprehenſion:

1ſt, To thoſe that are guilty of this great Evil, in introducing and mixing humane Inventions with the pure Worſhip of God; that halt between two Opinions. Oh! this is a great ſin, a God-provoking ſin; you do hereby corrupt and defile the pure Worſhip of God; and is not this very provoking to him? What can you do more to heighten the diſpleaſure of God againſt your ſelves and others? A little Leaven leavens the whole Lump: It was a good work in *David* to bring the Ark of the Lord from the houſe of *Abinidab*, but one Philiſtine Ceremony ſpoiled the whole work, 2*Sam.*6.2,3. A little Vice marrs a great deal of Virtue. *Naaman* the *Aſſyrian* is highly commended, 2 *King.* 5. 1. for a great man with his Maſter, and honourable, a mighty man of Valour, but he was a Læper, this marred all. One little ſpot in the Face blemiſheth all the Beauty. God muſt be worſhipped in a right Order and in a right Ordinance, and that only is a right Ordinance which is according to his Appointment, without the leaſt mixture of Mans Inventions; *quicquid præter Mandatum*

est Idolum, whatsoever is besides the Command is an Idol. Though men may look upon their own Inventions as very specious and beautiful, yet they have no Beauty but blackness in them in the account of God. The City *Hierapolis* had the Title of *Sacred*, as *The Sacred City*, (for so much the word signifies) yet was it the place of the most detested Idolatry, and wherein was worshipped the Idol of the *Mermaid Atergatis* (as *Pliny* writeth.) Though men put the Title of Sacred, Divine, *&c.* upon their superstitious Inventions, yet they are most detestible in Gods Eyes. One hath this Comparison, The Ape, saith he, is therefore the more deformed, because so like a man, and yet is not a man; so all the Worship which hath the greatest appearance of Humility, Zeal, and Mortification, which yet hath not its Original from God, is the more loathsom; *simulata Pietas duplex iniquitas*, A counterfeit Piety is a double Iniquity. Superstition, as one saith, is (*Res insana*,) and so it is indeed; for it is contrary to the Wisdom of the word and of the Spirit, which are the Ground and Life of the Worship of God.

2ly, Reproof to those who adhere to, and join with such a Worship, who cleave to, and comply with mixtures in the Worship of God.

1. *Obj.*

1. *Obj.* But may ſome ſay, we have a good End, and though there be ſome Corruption yet we do not own that.

Anſ. A good End will never juſtifie a bad Action; though a bad End will make a good Action bad, yet a good End will not make a bad Action good.

2ly, Whereas thou ſayeſt thou doſt not own the Corruption, and yet thou joineſt; thy very joining in it is an owning of it.

2. *Obj.* But we are neceſſitated to it, for we cannot enjoy publick Ordinances elſe; and is it not better to yield to ſome little things we cannot help, than to be deprived of publick Ordinances?

Anſ. Every little thing is a great thing in the Worſhip of God: The leaſt mixture of Mans Invention in Divine Worſhip is not to be yielded to; we muſt not ſo much as touch the unclean thing, which is the leaſt that can be, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. Conſider what the Lord ſpeaks by the Prophet *Haggai* 2. 12, 13, 14. *If one bear holy fleſh in the skirt of his Garment and with his skirt doe touch Bread, or Pottage,*

or Wine, or Oil, or any Meat, shall it be holy? and the Priests answered no; then said the Lord, if one that is unclean by a dead Body touch any of those, shall it be unclean? And the Priest answered and said, it shall be unclean. So is this Nation, and so is this People before me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean.

2ly, It's a grand mistake to think that God does not own an Ordinance unless it be publickly administred. Gods People have not always the enjoyment of publick Ordinances.

The Ordinances of God are sometimes thrust into Corners, and he is present with them there, *Joh.* 20. 19. We read here of a private meeting of Christians, and Christ in the midst of them, and this according to his Promise, *Mat.* 18. 20. Sometimes Christ's Spouse is in the Clefts of the Rock, and in the secret places of the Stairs, and there Christ loves to hear her voice, and to see her Face, *Can.* 2. 14. God sometimes calls his People into the Wilderness, and there he prepares a Table for them, *Hos.* 2. 14. and wilt not thou follow the foosteps of the Flock, though it be in the Wilderness? and seek for the presence of Christ among the Saints? *Cant.* 1. 7. *Tell me, oh thou whom my Soul loveth where thou feedest, where*

thou makeſt thy Flock to reſt at Noon, for why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the Flocks of thy Companions? Certainly it is good, yea, beſt to be where Chriſt is.

3. *Obj.* But, ſay ſome, the Ordinances are corrupted only to the Diſpenſers of them, not to thoſe that join in them; therefore we may join without ſin.

Anſ. If the Ordinances themſelves be corrupted by the mixtures of Mans Inventions, then they are corrupt as well to them that join in them, as to thoſe that diſpenſe them, but the Ordinances themſelves are corrupted by the Inventions of men. They are made one entire Worſhip, and any thing of Human Invention added to the Ordinances of God, and made one entire Worſhip, do corrupt his Ordinances. *This is to ſet mans Poſt by Gods Poſt.* Gods word is a perfect Rule of Worſhip without the Rules of Men. *Corruptio optimorum peſſima*, the beſt things corrupted, or corruptly uſed, are the worſt: Gold becomes Droſs, and holy things but Dung, when they are corrupted. *Iſa.* 1. 11, 12, 13. The Lord there reproved the People for their Sacrifices, and calls them vain Oblations; and yet they were ſuch as he him-

self had appointed; *Incense*, saith God, *is an abomination to me, the New-Moons, and the Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity even the solemn meeting.* These were things of Gods own Institution, yet when they had abused and corrupted them, they were abominable in his sight, and iniquity to him: So exact is God when any of his own Institutions be prostituetd to the Lusts of men, he owns them not, but looks upon them as abominable.

4. *Obj.* But Christ was present at the Worship of the Scribes and Pharisees, which was a corrupt Worship; Is not Christ an Example in this to us?

Ans. Christ is not an Example to us in all things that he did, we are not to imitate Christ, neither can we, in all things. Christ did many things as God, he wrought Cures, did many Miracles, *&c.* we cannot follow him in these things.

2ly, If in this Action Christ be an Example to us, then it's not only warrantable but a Duty to be present at a corrupt Worship; for it's undoubtedly a Duty to do as Christ did, wherein he is to be imitated by us; and then it is a

Sin

n to be abſent, for every defect and failure our Duty is a Sin.

3ly, Chriſt was preſent at the Worſhip of e Scribes and Phariſees, but how? not as an pprover, but as a Reprover: This was Chriſts nd in going, that he might convince them, d reprove their Superſtitions, as appears ainly by his declaring ſo much againſt their raditions, and ſuperſtitious Inventions; and you will follow Chriſt in this, then you uſt make that your End in going which was hriſts End, *viz.* go to reprove and confute em. But I ſuppoſe few that join in the Wor-ip that is now celebrated in Pariſhes, make at their end in joining.

5. *Obj.* But doth not Chriſt command the iſciples and the multitude to hear the Scribes d Phariſees? *Mat.* 23. 2.

1. *Anſ.* Here is not a word for hearing them; commands them to obſerve and do what ey bad them obſerve, and ſo they might do d not hear them.

2ly, Chriſt tells them the Scribes and Pha-ſees ſit in *Moſes* Seat; now *Moſes* was a Ma-ſtrate, and they were (as Dr. *Hamond* ſaith) the *Sanhedrim*, ſucceeding *Moſes* and the Seventy

Seventy Elders, and Christs charge amounts to thus much, all those moral Precepts out of *Moses* Law which they bid you observe, those observe and do: Though they be very superstitious and hypocritical, and say and do not, yet reject not you what they say, because of their wickedness. We are not to reject what is of God because of the wickedness of those that teach it: This seems to be the scope of Christs Speech.

3ly, Some do observe the Words may be rendred thus, according to the Original, *whatsoever they have bidden you observe, that observe and do*; the Original Verb being in the Aorist which speaks of the time past.

4ly, If this Text pleads for the hearing of any, it must be for the hearing of such as the Scribes and Pharisees were; now what they were Christ tells us in the same Chapter; *They bind heavy Burthens upon others, and lay them on Mens Shoulders, but will not touch them with one of their fingers.* v. 4. *They shut the Kingdom of Heaven against others.* v. 13. *They devour Widows houses.* v. 14. *They are blind Guides,* v. 15. *They pay Tithes of Mint, Annis, and Cummin, and omit the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.* v. 23. *They make clean the outside of the Cup, but within are*

were full of Extortion and Exceſs. v. 25. Now I appeal to you whether ſuch as theſe are to be heard and owned as the Miniſters of Chriſt? And yet if the Text plead for the hearing of any, it's for the hearing of ſuch.

5ly, Theſe are the men againſt which Chriſt did pronounce the greateſt woes, and that deſervedly, as being very wicked in their Lives, guilty of ſins of the firſt magnitude, and, as ſome have obſerved, committed the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and their ſeeming Sanctity was made a Cloak for their Wickedneſs.

6ly, Chriſt bid his Diſciples to beware of the Leaven of the Phariſees, *Mat.* 16.6. therefore doth not enjoin them to hear them. By Leaven is meant their corrupt and unſound Doctrines, as Chriſt expounds it *v.* 12. The Scribes and Phariſees as they were wicked in their Lives, ſo they were corrupt in their Judgments; they had got the Leproſie into their Heads, and under the Law ſuch as had the Leproſie in the Head were to be pronounced utterly unclean, and to be ſeparated from the Congregation.

7ly, But grant that theſe words of Chriſt do amount to a Command, to hear the Scribes and Phariſees, (though I rather incline to believe they do not, for the Reaſons already given)

ven) yet no Argument can be drawn from hence for Christians ordinary attendance upon the publick Ministry, as it is now constituted; for the Jewish Church was a true Church of a Divine Constitution, and yet standing when Christ spake those words, and the Scribes and Pharisees, as some affirm, true Ministers of this Church, but it will be hard to prove that either the Church of *England* is of a Gospel Constitution, or that the Officers of this Church are such.

6. *Obj.* But is it warrantable to forsake the publick Assemblies because of Corruption in the Worship of God?

Ans. 1st. That for which God did forsake his Temple, for that certainly it's warrantable for Gods People to separate themselves; but for what did God forsake his Temple? Was it not for corrupting his Worship?

2ly, It is warrantable, yea, a Duty to obey the Commands of God, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. We are forbidden to touch the unclean thing. *Hos.* 4. 15. The People are expresly forbidden to come unto *Gilgal*, or to go up unto *Bethaven*; why? those places were famous, *Gilgal* was a place famous for many things, there was that great Circum-

Circumcision after *Israel* came out of the Wilderness; there was the first Passover that ever was kept in the Land of *Canaan*: And *Bethaven* was no other than *Bethel*, which signifies the House of God, yet they must not come to *Gilgal*, or go up to *Bethaven*; why so? because these places, though they were famous formerly, yet now they are become infamous. They were, as Mr. *Burroughs* hath observed, before famous for the Worship of God, but now become the primest places for Idolatry in the whole Land: *Bethel*, the House of God, is now *Bethaven*, the House of Iniquity, *Amos* 5. There is the same Prohibition again, *Isa.* 52. 11. *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing, go ye out of the midst of her, be ye clean that bear the Vessels of the Lord.* God would not that we should allow of the least Corruption in Worship. The Primitive Christians would not throw a little Incense into the Fire to countenance an Idol. In *Tertullian*'s time it was accounted unlawful for Christians to wear a Garland, because it conformed them to Heathens: Christians must take heed of Simbolising with the World.

3ly, It is warrantable, yea a Duty for Christians to keep themselves pure, and to be undefiled in the way, *Jam.* 1. 27. *This is pure Religion*

gion and undefiled before God, for a man to keep himself unspotted from the World. Rev. 14. 4. there is an high commendation given of those that keep themselves undefiled; such are pronounced Blessed, *Psal.* 119. 1. But this we cannot do if we join with or allow of any impurity in Divine Worship.

4ly, If it be a Duty to worship God purely, and according to his own Institutions, then it's warrantable to divide from those places where his Worship is mixed and adulterated; but this surely is a Duty.

5ly, We may not join in any act of Worship in which we cannot hopefully expect the presence of God with us. Let me ask you this question: Can you go to Parish Assemblies and join in the Worship that is there celebrated in Faith? Can you do it believingly? Can you promise to your self the presence of God? *Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin.* If a man would see his Face in the Water, he must look into it when it is clear, not when it is muddy; he that would see the face of God in his Ordinance must keep to pure Ordinance.

7. *Obj.* But may I not be present with my Body though my heart be not present?

Anſ. No: For that is a mocking of God; we are not to joinwith our Bodies in any act of Worſhip we cannot do with our Souls, for that is Hypocriſie; what is Hypocriſie but the ſervice of the Lips, and diſtance of the Heart? This is to offer the Sacrifice of Fools; beſides, this is a countenancing of a corrupt Worſhip, a touching the unclean thing.

8. *Obj.* But may ſome ſay, why ſhould we ſcruple ſuch things in point of Worſhip, as the People of God in former Generations never ſcrupled?

Anſ. To this I anſwer, that may be ſinful now which was not ſinful in Gods People in former Generations, though ſinful in itſelf, yet not ſinful to them, in regard we have more clear diſcoveries of Goſpel-Light than in former Generations; the Saints lie under clear Convictions of the purity of Gods Worſhip, the purity of Divine Worſhip is more diſcovered in this Age than in former ages; now the Lord hath ſhown to his People the form of his Houſe, the faſhion thereof, the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, that therefore which was not ſin to them may be ſin to us.

2ly, We

2ly, We may not make the practice of the Saints in any Age our Rule, but the Word of God: The beſt men in the World are but Rules regulated, not regulating. We muſt only ſet our Watch, (ſaith one) according to theirs, as they ſet theirs according to the Sun. And if the Saints in former Ages did err in matters of Worſhip, is it warrantable for us to do ſo? It is recorded of Mr. *Greenham*, the Biſhop of *Ely* (in whoſe Dioceſs he lived) ſeeking to draw him to Conformity, objected thus unto him, *Why will not you yield*? *Luther* approved of theſe things, are you wiſer than he? His ſober and gracious Anſwer was, I reverence more the revealed Will of God, in teaching that worthy Inſtrument of God, Mr. *Luther*, ſo many neceſſary things to Salvation, than I ſearch into his ſecret Will why he kept back from his knowledge other things of leſs Importance.

9. *Obj.* But may we not yield in ſome things for Peace-ſake?

Anſ. I anſwer, Peace is an excellent thing, *Dulce nomen Pacis*, the very name of it is ſweet, and it could be wiſhed there were more Peace and Unity amongſt thoſe that profeſs Chri-

Chriſtianity; but we muſt not for peace ſake relinquiſh the truth; peace is excellent, but it is when it is joyned with truth; when peace and truth are in conjunction, this is ſweet, this is excellent indeed, but better have no peace than to have it with the loſs of truth. If we purchaſe peace with the loſs of the leaſt truth, we purchaſe it at too dear a rate, better have no peace than to have it in a ſinful way: A juſt War is better than an unjuſt Peace.

2dly. Though it may be the way to purchaſe the outward Peace, yet may it not be the way to loſe your inward Peace? and you will be great loſers by ſuch an exchange, for as much as peace with the world can never countervail the loſs of peace with God. Peace of Conſcience is infinitely to be preferred before peace with Men, better break with all the World than to break with God and your own Conſcience.

Nihil præſtantius pace bonæ Conſcientiæ Ignatius.

3dly, You that make this plea for your Conformity, may not have your end anſwered; you may meet with a diſappointment, ſaith Chriſt, *Mar.* 8. 35. *Whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it.* God doth oftentimes croſs ſuch in their Design, ſo that hereby they loſe peace with God and the world too; for a little conformity (as

they think) will not be look't upon as a ſufficient and valuable conſideration for ſuch a purchaſe; if you be not thorow pace't with them, and come up to the ſame pitch in all things, no peace to be expected long with them. Rather therefore let us conſider that to keep our peace with God is the way to obtain peace with Men, yea, with Enemies, *If Mans ways pleaſe God, he maketh his Enemies to be at peace with him*, Prov. 16. 7. *Whoſoever, ſaith Chriſt, ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the Goſpel ſhall ſave it*, Mark 8. 35.

2d *Uſe.* Let this then be an admonition to all that fear the Lord, to take heed of the leaſt mixture in the Worſhip of God, not to divide from, but to keep cloſe to the purity of Divine Worſhip; yield not to the leaſt Corruption in Worſhip under what pretence ſoever. As God (ſaith one of the Antients) is to be admired in the leaſt of his Creatures, as well as in the greateſt, ſo Chriſtians ſhould take heed of ſmall things as well as great in the matters of Worſhip.

The Idolatrous Jews are not only rebuked and threatned for eating of Swines Fleſh contrary to the Law, but alſo that the Broth was found in their Veſſels, *Iſa.* 65. 4. God is pure

and his Worſhip is to be pure like himſelf. Gods Worſhip is called his fear, now the fear of God is clean, *Pſal.* 19. It's a good ſpeech of Mr. *Burough*, that the Holineſs of a Duty will not bear us out in the miſcarriages of it. Think not that becauſe your Duties are Good and Holy in themſelves, you may venture upon mixtures in Gods Worſhip.

Direct. 2dly, But what muſt we do that we may keep to the purity of Gods Worſhip in theſe days, wherein his Worſhip is ſo much corrupted? 1. Hold faſt this principle, that in matters of Worſhip we are not to look only to what is forbidden, but to what is Commanded. The not holding firm this Principle is the ground of many great miſcarriages in the Worſhip of God; many think that becauſe ſuch and ſuch things are not forbidden, that therefore they may be allowed of in Divine Worſhip, but this is a grand miſtake, for all things in Divine Worſhip muſt have a Warrant out of Gods Word; it's not enough they are not forbidden, but they muſt be Commanded, either expreſly, or by ſome conſequence drawn from ſome Command, as *Tertullion* ſaith about the Crowning of the Soldier with Bayes, if it be ſaid it's lawful, becauſe

the Scripture doth not forbid it, it may be equally Retorted, it's therefore unlawful becauſe the Scripture doth not command it. *Nadab* and *Abihu*, they were ſmitten for offering of ſtrange fire, they might have objected, and ſaid, where was other fire forbidden? but it was not commanded; they offered ſtrange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, *And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them*, Lev. 10. 1, 2. for this Cauſe they were ſmitten, that they did not keep punctually to Gods Command. Hold faſt this principle Chriſtian, if thou wouldſt keep cloſe to the purity of Divine Worſhip.

2dly. Do as God doth; God ſtands upon little things in the matters of his Worſhip, *Rev.* 11. 1, 2. God meaſured the Temple and Altar, and them that Worſhipped therein, to ſhew (ſaith one) his utmoſt exactneſs about the matters of his Worſhip and Concernments of his People; imitate God herein, make Conſcience of the leaſt things, admit, allow not of the leaſt miſcarriage or Corruption in Worſhip. As *Moſes* when he was to lead the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, would not leave a hoof behind him, ſo leave nothing undone in matters of Divine Worſhip which God hath Commanded, but admit of nothing

which

which he hath not Commanded, go not a hairs breadth from the Rule be very exact and precise in matters of Worship.

3dly, Get much of the fear of God into your Hearts, let that Rule in you; the more the fear of God is prevailing in you, the more tender you will be of the Worship of God; oh! maintain awful apprehensions of God, *Psal.* 68. 35. God is terrible out of his holy place. Divine Worship is called the fear of God, in regard of that fear and awe of God (saith one) that should be upon men when they are in Divine Duties, *Gen.* 28. 17. When *Jacob* awaked from his vision, he said he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place; it is no other but the House of God and Gate of Heaven; *Bernard* descants very sweetly upon this, *Terribilis plane locus & Dignus omni reverentia:* A dreadful place surely, and worthy of all Reverence, not meaning the stone walls, but the presence of God, in the assembly where the faithful meet, the Angels frequent, and God himself dwelleth.

4ly, Study well this Text; here you shall see how severe God is against those that will dare to Corrupt his Worship, that swear by the Lord, and swear by *Malcham*: what a severe, dreadful sentence is pronounced against

them? they are put into the black Roll to be destroyed. And study that Text well, *Ezek.* 43. 8. and study the second Commandment, where all Corruption in the Worship of God is forbidden; there you will find that the Lord your God is a jealous God, and will visit this Iniquity unto the third and fourth Generation.

5ly, Look upon the Worship of God as a great matter; the Lord complains of *Ephraim*, that he had written to him the great things of his Law, but they were accounted as a strange thing, *Hos.* 8. 12. Divine Worship is one of the great things of Gods Law, and should not therefore be accounted either as a little or strange thing by us. God looks upon it as a great matter, and shall we account it as a little thing? It is a good expression of one, that to worship God aright, and to walk before him in uprightness, are the two Poles upon which the whole body of a heavenly Life is turned; and indeed there is nothing that speaks a man more a Christian than this, *Phil.* 3. 3.

6ly, Consider not what others do in matters of Worship, but what God hath commanded to be done; make the Word of God and not the Practice of men thy Rule, *Deut.* 12. 30. *Take heed to thy self that thou be not snared by follow-*

llowing them, and that thou enquire not after heir Gods, ſaying, how did theſe Nations ſerve heir Gods? even ſo will I do likewiſe. The Peole were forbidden to enquire how God had eſtroyed thoſe Nations from before them that erved their Gods; and obſerve in the 32. *v.* *What thing ſoever I command you, obſerve to o it, thou ſhalt not add thereto, or diminiſh om it.* True Obedience is a readineſs to do s we are bidden; we are apt to judge that a uty which moſt do, not which God comands; but we muſt, if we will do our Duty, o what God commands, without adding or diiniſhing. Some obſerve that expreſſion of *ve*, *Gen.* 3. 5. where ſhe ſaid, that God had id they ſhould not eat of it, nor touch it, leſt ey die. We do not read that God forbad them to touch it, et it's thought this was added y *Eve* for cautions ſake, as if he were ſo careful to keep Gods Command about Eating, that ſhe added, they muſt not ſo much as touch it; whence an Ancient gathereth, that nothing, though it be for a good end, is to be added to Gods Precepts.

Nihil vel causa boni addendum eſt præcepto. Amb.

Laſtly, Contemplate much the holineſs of God. God is originally, gloriouſly, tranſcen-

dently and perfectly holy; and as God is, s
must his Worship be, he will be worshipped i
the Beauties of Holiness, not in the blackness o
Iniquity, 1 *Chron.* 16. 29. A pure and hol
Worship do suit best with the holy God. A
you therefore to whom God hath shewn th
form of his House, and the fashion thereof, th
goings out thereof, and the comings in there
of, keep close to the purity of his Worship.

THE

THE
Great and Necessary
DUTY
OF
Mutual Exhortation
Opened and *Applied*:

From HEBREWS III. XIII.

WHEREIN

The Nature of the DUTY is opened in the several Branches thereof, the evil of its neglect is shewn, and some Motives laid down to press Christians to a more vigorous practice of it; the Hindrances to this Duty are removed, and several helps given for a right performance of it.

By an unworthy Servant of Jesus Christ.

Mal. 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.*

Ep. Jud. 20. *But ye beloved building up your selves in your most holy Faith.*

THE

Great and neceſſary DUTY

OF

Mutual Exhortation

Opened and *Applied*:

FROM

Heb. 3. 13. *But exhort one another daily while it is called to day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of Sin.*

THE great ſcope of the Author of this Epiſtle (whether the Apoſtle *Paul* or ſome other) is to exhort theſe believing Hebrews to ſtedfaſtneſs in the Faith, perſeverance in Grace and Holineſs, that it might appear *they received not the Grace of God in vain.*

In order to which he doth propoſe to them the Example of Chriſt, *v.* 2. who was faithful to him that appointed him. Chriſt was faithful to all his betruſtments. *Moſes* was faithful as a Servant, but Chriſt as a Son, *v.* 5, 6. whoſe Houſe we are if we hold faſt the confidence and rejoycing of the Hope firm unto the end.

And

And to diſcourage and deterr them from Apoſtaſie, he ſets before them the Evil Example of the *Iſraelites*, how they tempted God, and through Unbelief departed from him, againſt whom God *ſware in his wrath, they ſhould not enter into his reſt. v.* 11. Hereupon he grounds this cautionary admonition, *viz. Take heed Brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God.* A ſerious and ſeaſonable Caution, *take heed*, ſee to it; the word in the *Greek* ſignifies not only to look with the Eye, but with the heart alſo; exerciſe your greateſt care and diligence about this.

And as a ſovereign preſervative againſt this evil of Apoſtaſie, he urgeth the practice of this important Duty in the words of the Text, *But exhort one another*, &c.

This adverſative particle [*but*] ſhews the Antitheſis of theſe words to the former, *Take heed of an evil Heart of Unbelief*, &c. *But exhort one another.*

In the Words theſe three things are obſervable.

1. The Duty enjoined, *exhort one another.*

2. The frequency of this Duty, *daily, while it is called to day*; do it preſently, neglect, delay not, it's a duty that admits not of delays, it

it must speedily, presently done, *while it is called to day*, &c.

3. The Motive to this duty, taken *ab incommodo*, from the great inconvenience and mischief that may and will follow the neglect of it, *lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin.*

Where we have two evil effects of sin.

1. *Hardening.*
2. *Deceiving.*

Sin hath never a good property in it, it is *malum in se*, it's evil, and only evil, and all the effects of Sin are evil, no good fruit can grow upon this bad Tree, *&c.*

From the Duty here enjoined, which I chiefly design to speak to, there is this Doctrine.

Doct. That it is the Duty of Christians to exhort one another. Or thus, Mutual Exhortation is a great Christian Duty, *Heb.* 10. 24. *Let us consider one another to provoke unto Love and good works.* Jud. 20. *And ye beloved building up your selves in your most holy Faith.* It's not the Ministers Duty only, but Christians are to exhort and build up one another; and in *Mal.* 3. 16. it's said, *They that feared the Lord spake often one to another*, of things

things no doubt pertaining to mutual edification, they ſpake (as it's ſaid of Chriſt, *Acts* 1.3.) of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. This is a duty at all times ſeaſonable, but eſpecially in evil times.

In the proſecution of this Doct.

1. I ſhall open the nature of this duty.

2. Give the reaſons of it.

1. What doth this duty of mutual exhortation denote?

1. A quickning and ſtirring up one another to all good and holy duties, a provoking to love and good works, a ſtirring up the Graces of one another, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. A blowing up every ſpark into a flame to ſharpen and extimulate, *Prov.* 27. 17. *Iron ſharpeneth Iron, ſo a man ſharpeneth the Countenance of his Friend*; Chriſtians ſhould ſet an edge upon each others affections, and raiſe and rouze up the dull ſpirits, 2 *Pet.* 1. 13. This is the great uſe and end of Chriſtian Communion, one Chriſtian will help to heat another, a ſingle Coal ſoon dies, but many live Coals put together will keep life in one another. One Chriſtian by good diſcourſe drops Oil upon another, that makes the lamp of his Grace to ſhine the brighter (ſaith one,) but Chriſtians in theſe daies inſtead of quickning, how do they

they deaden each other, dishearten and discourage one another; instead of provoking to love, they provoke one another to Wrath, and instead of provoking one another to good Works, they provoke to evil Works; but this is a great perversion of this duty.

2. To comfort one another, the word in the Original παρακαλεῖτε signifies to comfort, as to exhort, to pour Oyl and Wine into wounded and broken Spirits, to be mutual comforters, to drop Oil into one anothers wounds, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. *Who comforteth us in all our Tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.* Whatsoever comfort we have, it's given for the good of others, we are debtors of it to others, one then ought to comfort another; whatsoever light the Cœlestial Bodies, the Moon and the Stars have, they bestow it upon these inferiour Bodies, they have their lights from the Sun, and they reflect it again upon the Creatures below. So Christians should be communicative of their Comforts and experiences, they ought to be mutual Comforters, and so much this duty doth import.

3. To admonish, it denotes Christian reproof and admonition not to suffer sin to lie upon

upon one another, *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren if a Man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs* καταρτίζετε put him into joynt again, *Rom.* 15. 14. The *Romans* were commended for this that they were filled with all knowledge, able to admoniſh one another, *Col.* 3. 16. *Teaching and admoniſhing one another, Epheſ.* 5. 11. We are to have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them and to dehort one another from evil.

4. A holy care and watchfulneſs over one another, *Heb.* 13. 17. It's the duty of Miniſters in a ſpecial manner, therefore they are called Watchmen, but is not their duty ſolely; but Chriſtians are to watch over one another, thou muſt not ſay as *Cain* ſaid, am I my Brothers Keeper? *Cain* denied to be his Brothers Keeper, but thou ought not, there is a care and vigilance that Chriſtians are to exerciſe one toward another.

5. Praying for one another mutual; exhortation denotes mutual praying, our prayers are not for a private concern, but to be poured out for others, we ſhould bear the conditions of others upon our hearts in all our approaches to the Throne of Grace, and ſo much the word ſignifies to be Advocates for one another. *Jude* 20.

10. *Praying in the Holy Ghoſt*, Epheſ. 6. 18. *Praying alwaies with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance and ſupplication for all Saints.* James 5. 16. *Pray one for another.* This is the Churches Treaſure, the common ſtock of Prayers; by this means the members of Chriſts Body have Communion together, though at a diſtance; this is a great duty, the weak need the Prayers of the ſtrong, and the ſtrong need the Prayers of the weak; it's a duty incumbent upon all, and needful for all, yea, for the ſtrong and moſt eminent, 1 *Cor.* 12. 21. *The head cannot ſay to the feet*, &c. The Apoſtle *Paul* he earneſtly begs the Prayers of the *Theſſalonians*, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 17. So *Rom.* 15. 30. When the Prayers of Saints are twined together, they make ſuch a ſtrong Cord it cannot be broken; hereby Chriſtians are obliged to each other: Thus I have ſhewen you the import of this duty in theſe 5 particulars.

2. But why is mutual exhortation ſo great a Chriſtian Duty?

1. Becauſe it's Commanded. God requires it, and does expect our obedience to his Command: it's Commanded in the Text, and in many other Scriptures already mentioned for the proof of the Doctrine; ſo that it's neceſſa-

ry, *necessitate præcepti*, in regard of his Command.

2. But no man is born for himself, every man should be a publick good, not to care for his own things, but for the things of others. 1 *Cor.* 10. 24. *Let no man seek his own, but every man anothers wealth.* Christians should be of publick Spirits, seeking the good of others *Gal.* 6. 8. taking all opportunities to do good and this is to answer the end of our Creation we are neither born nor born again for ourselves.

3. Because it is the end of the Communion of Saints; next to Gods Glory this is the main end of the Communion of Saints to edify one another, and where this is neglected, the end is not answered, God hath therefore called us into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, that we should mutually promote the good and benefit of each other, 1 *Cor* 1. 9, 10. And when Christians do carry on this end, it makes their Communion very sweet and pleasant, *Psal.* 133. 1. 2. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity, it's like precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even *Aarons* beard, that went down to the skirts of his Garment. The multitude of Stars joyned in

Heaven,

Heaven, make the *Gallaxia*, or milky way, ſo a company of Chriſtians meeting in one make a glorious light indeed, and ſuch a luſtre (ſaith one) as will dazle the Eyes of the wicked world, and when this great end of the Communion of Saints is promoted, it makes them beautiful as *Tirzah*, comely as *Jeruſalem*, terrible as an Army with Banners, *Cant.* 6. 4.

4. The relation that is amongſt Chriſtians one to another, doth evince this to be a great duty; they are members of one and the ſame body, *Epheſ.* 5. 30. And ſhall not Members ſeek the good of one another, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12, 13. *Rom.* 12. 4, 5. As we are all of the body, ſo we ſhould all ſerve the body, as members in the natural body have all their different uſe, they are all ſerviceable to the body, ſo ſhould all the members of Chriſts myſtical body; be they ſhould as Bees bring all their Honey (ſaith one) to the common Hive.

5. The common eſtate and condition of Chriſtians here in the world, doth evidence this to be a duty, in regard of the many temptations, and continual ſolicitations to evil, while here in the body, and by reaſon of inwelling corruption we are eaſily tempted to evil, ſoon drawn away of our own luſts, and inticed, *Jam*, 1. 14. Every man, ſaith the

Apostle, he takes in the godly too; a Christian is a mixt Creature made up of flesh and Spirit, and we have corruption within, and we meet with temptations without; the grand adversary of our souls goeth about like a roaring Lion seeking whom he may devour, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. We meet with many hindrances and diversions from our duties; this evil world where we have our commoration, it's a dulling and deadning world, it takes off the Chariot wheels of our Souls & makes us drive heavily in the ways of God. Our Lord Jesus doth intimate the great and continual danger Christians are in by being in the world, *John* 17. 11. But those are in the world. To say they were in the world, was to say (saith one) they were in the midst of the Sea, under the power of all winds, and tempests, without any Haven; to be in the world, implies those 2 things; to be in a place of Wickedness, where the Godly have daily temptations to sin; and are dayly exposed to troubles; it is therefore a very needful duty for the Godly to be exhorting one another to good, seeing they have so many temptations to evil.

And so much for the reasons of the Doctrine.

For

For APPLICATION;

1. *Use.* If this be ſo, that mutual Exhortation is a great Chriſtian Duty, then ſurely the neglect of it is a great Evil, and much to be deplored; the evil is the greater and more grievous becauſe ſo general, it's an Epidemical Evil. Oh, that Chriſtians ſhould be ſo unfruitful and unprofitable! That they ſhould ſo little ſtudy the good of one another! There are many evils in the Womb of this Evil, as,

1. This is one great cauſe of Barrenneſs amongſt Chriſtians, *Hoſ.* 10. 1. *Iſrael* is called an empty Vine, becauſe he did bring forth fruit to himſelf; a ſelfiſh Spirit is a barren Spirit. The Apoſtle *Paul* bewails this, *Phil.* 2. 21. *For all ſeek their own, not the things which be Jeſus Chriſts:* And is not ſuch a Spirit now predominant? And no wonder then that there is ſo much barrenneſs amongſt us: And is it not an evil for Chriſtians to be barren? Under the Law barreneſs was a curſe, and ſure to be barren under the Goſpel is to be nigh to curſing, *Heb.* 6. 7, 8. *For the Earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth Bleſſing from God; but that which beareth*

Thorns and Briers is rejected, and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned. Gods People are called Trees of Righteouſneſs, and of Gods own Planting, *Iſa.* 61. 3. And for trees of Righteouſneſs to be barren, this is ſad: What! no better fruit in the Lords Vineyard than in the Wilderneſs? The Spouſe of Chriſt is compared to a Flock of Sheep, *whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren amongſt them.* Cant. 4. 2. but how unlike are we to Chriſts Spouſe in this.

2. Hence it is that there is ſuch a declenſion of the power of Godlineſs among us; we retain the form, but little of the power, the life and power of Religion is much decayed, through a neglect of this Duty; though we have the leaves of Profeſſion upon us, yet we have not the fruit of a Goſpel-Converſation *Col.* 3. 16. Chriſtians teaching and admoniſhing one another is an effectual means to have the word of God dwell richly in us, which makes us rich in holineſs, and fruitful in every good work.

3. This is one great cauſe of the many miſcarriages among Chriſtians by reaſon of which many are ſtumbled, and many hardened in their evil ways, and God's name greatly diſhonoured, the Spirit grieved, and the infinite

Love

Love of Christ wounded; possibly if thou hadst discharged thy Duty (Christian) to thy Brother, he had not so miscarried, the sins he hath falln into might have been prevented.

4. This is the great cause of the feebleness, weakness and unsettledness among us, that many are so unsettled, so weak and so soon shaken in mind, and not more rooted and built up in Christ *Col.* 2.6,7. When Christians walk in Christ, that is, live in the practice of all the Duties of Godliness enjoined them by Christ, then they are rooted and built up in him: Mutual Exhortation is the *Jachin* and the *Boaz*, the strength and the establishment of Christians, and the neglect of it is the cause that so many fall from their own Stedfastness.

5. The neglect of this gives Satan great advantage to plunge many into great fears, doubts, and despondencies; were Christians diligent to discharge their Duty, these fears and dejections which have sadly oppressed and sunk the Spirits of many, might have been prevented. We read in the Gospel, that while the men slept the Enemy came and sowed his tares, so while Christians sleep and are neglective of their Duty to one another, Satan got advantage to sow his Tares, and to inject fears into poor weak Christians, and to plunge them in-

to a Labrynth of doubts and deſpondencies. 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. The Apoſtle adviſeth the *Corinthians* to confirm their Love to the inceſtuous *Corinthian*, who was humbled for his Sin, leſt Satan get advantage: The not diſcharging our duty in exhorting one another, puts an advantage into the hands of Satan againſt us; our ſecurity is his opportunity; as the Flie will never reſort to the Hony when it's hot, but when it's cold, ſo when our Spirits are heated and quickened by mutual Exhortation, then Satan will not come near us with his temptations; but when our Spirits are low and dead, then Beelzebub the god of the Flies will reſort to us, and endeavour to plunge us into fears and deſpondencies.

6. The Non-performance of this Duty is the cauſe that many are hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin; this evil effect doth proceed from a neglect of it, therefore it's urged in the Text, *Exhort one another, leſt any of you*, &c. This ſin hardens not only the wicked but the Godly; to be hardened is not only the ſin of a wicked man, but may be the ſin of a godly man; a ſtrange cruſtineſs and hardneſs may grow upon their hearts.

Thus you ſee the many evils that the omiſſion of this Duty doth produce, and it's the great

cauſe

cauſe that many are hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

2. *Uſe.* Of Exhortation.

Is it thus that mutual Exhortation is a great Duty incumbent upon Chriſtians? then put it into practice, be active and abundant in this great Chriſtian Duty, be exhorted to exhort one another, to conſider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; ſtudy one another; Chriſtians ſhould ſtudy one anothers caſes and diſtempers, and be ſolicitous of their cure; the *Romans* were greatly commended for this, *Rom.* 15. 14.

Let us do it daily, continually, there muſt be no intermiſſion, nor remiſſion of this Duty. Chriſtians, put not off the Practice of it, 'tis now a very ſeaſonable Duty in theſe evil days. The time of *Malachi*'s Propheſying was a very evil time, as it appears *Chap.* 3. 15. The proud were called happy, and yet in the 16. *v.* it is ſaid, *then they that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another*: They did not omit their Duty becauſe the days were evil, no, but were more frequent in it, for they ſpake often one to another; the worſe the times are the better we ſhould be, and this is the way to make the times better. The day of Chriſt is approach-

approaching, *Heb.* 10. 25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling of your ſelves together, but exhorting one another, and ſo much the rather as you ſee the day approaching*, the day of Chriſt appearance, the day of judgment, the Audit day, when we muſt be called to a ſtrict account, how we have diſcharged our duties to God and one another; the appropinquation of the day of Chriſt ſhould quicken and awaken us to our Duty. For the enforcing of this Exhortation I deſire you to conſider theſe following particulars.

1. Conſider it's the only way to keep our ſelves pure from other mens ſins, as the Apoſtle exhorts *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. We muſt not only give an account of our own ſins, but of the ſins of others that have been committed through a neglect of our Duty to them: One prayed to be delivered from his other mens ſins. We contract much relative Guilt by bearing with, and indulging one another in ſin, *Lev.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy heart, thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.* Some render the words thus, *Thou ſhalt not lift up his ſin upon him*, or diſplay it as a Banner to his diſgrace. Our Tranſlators render it thus, *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer ſin upon him.* Sin is ſo hateful

ful a Viper as we ſhould club it down, and ſtub it up wherever we find it. Wouldſt thou not contract the Guilt of other mens ſins upon thee? Then diſcharge this Duty with all faithfulneſs towards them.

2. Conſider it's an effectual means to keep one another awake in theſe ſleeping times; this is ſurely a ſlumbering Age, now the wiſe Virgins as well as the fooliſh are ſlumbering and ſleeping, and though God is jogging us by his Providences, and calling aloud to us by his terrible Diſpenſations, *awake thou that ſleepeſt*; yet we ſay with the ſluggard, *Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands together*, *Prov.* 6. 9,10. A good and effectual means to keep Chriſtians awake is to be quickening and awakening one another to their duty; in the ſweating ſickneſs they that were kept awake eſcaped; but it was deadly to them that were ſuffered to ſleep, to ſleep now may be very dangerous if not deadly to thee, thy ſleep may prove the ſleep of death.

3. Conſider much good may hereby be procured to our ſelves and others, and much evil prevented. 1. Hereby our own good may be much promoted, and words ſpoken in ſeaſon how good are they, how forcible are right words, thereby the weak may be ſtrengthened,

ed, the ſtaggering ſettled, and the dejected comforted. *Job.* 4. 3, 4. *Behold thou haſt inſtructed many, and thou haſt ſtrengthened the weak hands; thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou haſt ſtrengthened the feeble knees.* And *Job* ſaith of himſelf, that *he was Eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame,* Job 29. 15. And much ſin prevented; thou mayſt gain thy Brother, ſave a Soul by a wiſe and loving Admonition. Chriſt directs *Matth.* 18. 15. *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy Brother,* &c.

4. Conſider for this end God hath given us Gifts and Graces. 1 *Cor.* 22. 7. *The Miniſtration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* The *Greek* word imports ſuch a kind of profit as redounds to Community, (as one obſerves upon the place.) We ſhould imploy our Talents for a publick good, for that end for which God hath given them, or elſe we miſemploy them.

5. It will bring great comfort in a dying hour; *Hezekiahs* integrity did greatly comfort him in the apprehenſions of Death; though thy holy Exhortations and wiſe Admonitions have not had their deſired effect upon others, yet

yet thou ſhalt have comfort, in that thou haſt diſcharged thy Duty; though thou haſt not gained thy Brother, yet thou ſhalt ſave thy own Soul, *Ezek.* 3. 20. And the neglect of this Duty will gripe ſore at the hour of death: It's reported of a godly Miniſter, that he ſhould utter himſelf thus upon his Death-bed: *I confeſs that in publick I have been ſomewhat full in Reproof, in Admonition, in Inſtruction: but in private my backwardneſs, my baſhfulneſs, my daſtardlineſs, have been intollerable, and I may truly ſay, that if any thing lie as a burden upon my Conſcience, it's this.* When Death comes to look thee on the Face, (as ſhortly it will) then nothing can comfort thee but thy integrity.

Qu. But what muſt we do rightly to diſcharge this Duty of Mutual Exhortation?

Anſ. For Direction herein I ſhall,

1. Shew the hindrances to this Duty.

2. Give ſome helps for the right management of it.

1. Wouldſt thou be found in the practice of this great important Duty? Then labour to remove thoſe things which are hindrances to it: as,

1. Want

1. Want of affection one to another, we are not kindly affectioned to one another, and the want of love is a great hindrance to this duty, love among Chriſtians is much decayed; the heat and fervor of our love to God is much abated, and no wonder that our love to one another is ſo remiſs; we are fallen into the dregs of time, the laſt and worſt times, of which Chriſt ſpeaks, *Mat.* 24. 12. *That becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold.* The abounding of iniquity is a notable quench-Coal to love. It is the obſervation of one, the world (ſaith he) hath been once deſtroyed with water for the heat of luſt, and ſhall be again with fire for the coldneſs of love: it was ſaid in the primitive times, how do the Chriſtians love one another; but where is primitive love now to be found among us? Oh! Divine love, whether art thou gone? Oh! little of it doth now reſide in the breaſts of Chriſtians; if there were true love among Chriſtians, there would be a conſidering one anothers wants and weakneſſes, one anothers trials and temptations, one anothers fears and doubts, one anothers diſtreſſes and diſtractions, and acordingly comport and carry themſelves each to other, pitying of, and praying for one another, ſympathizing with, and bearing one ano-

anothers burthen; certainly the decay of love among us is a great hindrance to this duty.

2. Want of Spirituality is another hindrance to this duty; our hearts are not in a ſpiritual frame, there is ſpirituality much wanting in the hearts and converſations of Chriſtians, they are Carnal, and walk as Men, as the Apoſtle charges the *Corinth.* 1 *Cor.* 3.3. *For ye are yet Carnal, for whereas there is among you envying and ſtrife, and diviſions, are ye not Carnal and walk as men?* Envying, ſtrife and diviſions are works of the fleſh; a ſpiritual carriage and converſation is much wanting, though much expected among Chriſtians; how can he that is Carnal exhort others to Spirituality? How can he reſtore a a fallen Brother, *Gal.* 6. 1. Ye that are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs. The decay of the power of Godlineſs is a great hindrance to this duty.

3. Another hindrance is baſhfulneſs of Spirit, there is a ſtrange kind of baſhfulneſs among Chriſtians, in reference to this, afraid to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, leſt they ſhould offend; ſo we chuſe rather to offend in the neglect of our duty, than to be faithful leſt we ſhould offend. *Paul* was of another Spirit, *Gal.* 2. 11. He would not ſpare an offending *Peter*, we are

apt

apt to think that to be faithful to one another, will cause a breach of love, when it's the best way to increase it: Many are ready to object, that if they do admonish freely, they shall lose their friend, when it's the only way to keep him. *Let the righteous smite me*, saith David, *it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent Oyl which shall not break my head*, Psal. 141. 5.

4. Selfishness doth much obstruct and hinder the practice of this duty. Christians are of private Spirits; Oh! it's a very selfish age we live in, all seek their own, we do not walk by the Apostles rule, *Rom.* 15. 1, 2. We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves; let every one of us please his Neighbour for his good to edification.

5. Want of life and zeal. Many of the professors of this age have a name to live, but are dead, walking Sepulchres, a living name written upon the Sepulchre of the dead, many are rather nominal than real Christians, no life, no warmth, no heat in them, how can they that have no life or heat in themselves, quicken or heat others, such will rather deaden than quicken; how do many stifle and quench the motions of the Spirit in one another, cast

water

ater upon that holy fire, and instead of irring up, do stop and hinder one another their Holy Progress? Christians in this ge are more notional than experimental, ore formal than powerful, which is a great inderance to this duty.

Thus having pointed at the hindrances, shall lay down some helps which are reatly conducing to the practice of this uty.

1. Is Knowledge; Would you exhort ne another, then labour after much knowledge, to be filled with all knowledge, *Rom.* 15. 14. It was the great commendation of this Church of the *Romans*, that hey were filled with all knowledge, able o admonish one another, he that teacheth others, must be taught himself, he that gives light to others, must himself be inlightned, *nihil dat quod non habet*, no man can give that which he hath not. Get a spiritual Treasure of the word in your hearts, that it dwell richly in you, 2 *Col.* 3. 16. ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν, in-dwell in you that you may be like the good Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of God, which the Lord Christ likens unto an Housholder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure things new

and old, *Mat.* 13. 52. *The Tongue of the Wiſe is as a Tree of life, it feeds many,* Prov. 10. 20, 21. A knowing Chriſtian yields precious and pleaſant food, wherewith many are fed.

Labor for a ſpirit of meekneſs, a meek ſpirit is [illegible] exhort and admoniſh, *Gal.* 6. 1. *He that is overtaken in a fault, muſt be reſtored in the ſpirit of meekneſs.* The Apoſtle *Paul* exhorts *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. *In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*, as meekneſs becomes Miniſters, ſo all Chriſtians, it's a Garment that becomes every Chriſtians back; as the meek are moſt fit to receive inſtruction, counſel, and admonition, ſo the meek are moſt fit to inſtruct, to counſel, and admoniſh, meekneſs and wiſdom, they are coupled together, *James* 3. 13. *Moſes* is renowned in Scripture for meekneſs, and wiſdom.

3. Keep up and maintain a Spirit of love, *let Brotherly love continue*, *Heb.* 13. 1. Love will carry us out to ſeek the good of one another, make us publick ſpirited, this is one excellent property of love that it ſeeketh not her own, 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. 1 *Cor.* 10. 33. The Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaking of *Timothy*, who ſought the good of the *Philippians*, ſaith, *Phil.* 2. 20. *I*

have

have no man like minded who will naturally care for your ſtate. Love (ſaith one) is the ſpring of labour, actions are affections put forth and made viſible; love will make Chriſtians laborious, ſeeking the good of one another. It's the obſervation of *Auſtin*, that love built the two Cities, holy love built the City of God, and unholy love built, or is dayly building the City of Satan; love is a joyning or edifying, and condeſcending Grace, *Epheſ.* 4. 16. *officium aſcendit, amor deſcendit*, duty aſcends, and love deſcends, it makes a man of a condeſcending Spirit; labor (Chriſtians) to receive and maintain a Spirit of love; our love ſhould be univerſal to all Saints. *Luthers* motto was *in quo aliquid Chriſti video diligo.*

4. Labour for more plentiful effuſions of the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, *Eph.* 5. 18. Call for more Flagons of this holy Wine, preſs after greater Meaſures, and higher Degrees of Holineſs, get up to the top of Godlineſs, perfect Holineſs in the fear of God; the want of Spirituality and Holineſs is a bar to this Duty, *Eph.* 5. 15. *See then that ye walk circumſpectly*, ἀκριβῶς, exactly, accurately, ſtrive to get to the height of Godlineſs, as the word imports. If there were more Spirituality among us, there would be more care of this Duty.

5. Let the fear of God be ſtrong in your hearts; a holy fear of God will reſtrain us from Sin, and it will conſtrain us to Duty; 'twill keep us cloſe to all mutual and relative Duties; it will make us fear to ſin, either in doing of evil, or in the omiſſion of good, yea, to fear nothing but Sin, as *Chryſoſtome* (when he received a threatning Meſſage from the Empreſs) anſwered, *Nil niſi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but ſin. Divine Fear will fill thee full of courage and boldneſs in the Cauſe of God. It's obſervable, that they who are moſt full of the Fear of God, are moſt filled with a holy Magnanimity and Courage; it makes a man of a great and large Spirit: A ſlaviſh Fear doth ſtraiten the Heart, but a holy Fear doth dilate and much enlarge the Heart, *Iſay.* 60. 5. The Fear of God doth expell other Fears; as the leſſer Load-Stones are ſaid to loſe their vertue in the preſence of the greater, ſo holy Fear doth leſſen and drive out of our hearts carnal and diſtruſtful Fears: It is an awakening Grace, and it will cauſe us to keep one another awake in theſe ſleepy and ſlumbering times.

Laſtly, Often meditate of the approach of the day of Chriſt, when we ſhall be all called to an account; and, as one ſaith well, though men

men ſhall be ſaved according to their Faith, yet they ſhall be judged according to their works; the Judgment-day is haſtening, the Judge ſtandeth before the Door ready to come in; this day is every day nearer to us, let the appropinquation of the day of Chriſts coming to Judgment dwell upon thy thoughts. *Exhort one another daily while it's called to day*, it's but a day, and we know not how ſhort our day may be. This well conſidered, will put us upon a more ready diſpatch of all our works and Duties, and *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants whom when their Lord cometh he ſhall find thus doing.*

FINIS.